

AS A BOY, 46-year-old designer Hiroki Nakamura would watch Westerns with his father and uncle at home in Japan, enamored by scenes of unsullied landscapes of the American Southwest. When he was a teenager, Nakamura visited northwestern Alaska, where he experienced its native communities as well as rough-

wear brand informed by his worldwide travels and research. “In the beginning, I was just traveling to visit different suppliers and manufacturers, having heard there was a great leather supplier in the north of Italy or a little place in Japan,” Nakamura says of his trips. On each excursion,

has quietly become one of the most coveted and influential menswear lines. These days, Nakamura is traveling less, choosing instead to stay close to his wife and daughter in Los Angeles and to his design studio. On a recent drive from LA to San Francisco, Nakamura photographed his family, capturing



## Travel Vision

Visvim

THE NOMADIC EXISTENCE OF  
DESIGNER HIROKI NAKAMURA.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF HIROKI NAKAMURA

and-tumble frontiersmen firsthand. Even before he arrived in the US, Nakamura had been intrigued by early North American civilizations. “I’ve been collecting Native American moccasins for years, which led to [the discovery of] other Native American craft and jewelry that continues to inspire my work to this day,” he says. Nakamura would spend the coming decades traveling around the world, clinging to this or that custom or artifact. In 2000, he founded Visvim, an artisanal, workwear-inspired mens-

Nakamura would take photos to document the craftsmen, and as the number of these scouting trips increased, so too did the quality of his photography. He moved from digital to medium-format film cameras. The resulting images became a source of inspiration and expression for the designer. Sixteen years after its creation, Visvim—which mixes, very honestly, the traditions of American craftsmanship with the textiles and design qualities of disparate cultures, most notably the moccasin-inspired sneakers—

the sincere banality of the common American road trip. They drove up in his vintage 1979 Jeep Grand Wagoneer, one of many items Nakamura has collected over the years that remind him of the rich yet forgotten aesthetic history of American engineering. “I like to make things that I would enjoy everyday, and it has to be authentic,” he says. “It is important to me to reintroduce the old stuff made in the old way to fit the modern world. It is my job to make that translation work.”